

SENATE BILL 4017
By Ketron

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to recruitment and retention of public
school teachers.

WHEREAS, the Office of Education Accountability recently issued a comprehensive study, "Teaching Kids Math: Is Tennessee Doing Enough?", that outlines the issues that must be addressed to improve the math proficiency of K-12 students in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, one key area of concern is the shortage of qualified mathematics and science teachers in Tennessee's public schools, including the high percentage of students who receive instruction in math and science from teachers who do not hold certification in either subject; and

WHEREAS, this shortage can be attributed to a number of factors that range from geographic and economic disadvantages of individual schools to the overriding factor of the noncompetitive compensation package currently available to a certified mathematics and/or science teacher as compared to salary and other incentives offered by other professions to similar college graduates who earn degrees in math and science; and

WHEREAS, many school systems across the nation have attempted to address this issue, either at the individual, system or state level, by offering additional incentives to both hire and retain certified mathematics and science teachers and it is most appropriate for Tennessee to conduct a comprehensive review of compensation and incentive packages that could be offered by the local education agencies of our state, at their discretion, to attract and retain mathematics and science teachers; and

WHEREAS, to participate in this global economy the children of Tennessee must be able to compete in the fields of mathematics and science on both a national and international

level and that can only be achieved if they receive appropriate instruction from highly qualified mathematics and science teachers; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 2, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated section:

Section 49-2-2__.

(a) A local board of education may develop a differentiated compensation plan to provide compensation, bonuses, supplemental pay or other incentives to mathematics and science teachers in addition to compensation provided by the state salary schedule under § 49-3-306. Such differentiated compensation plan shall consider the need to increase compensation for teachers of mathematics and the sciences in order to attract and retain highly qualified teachers of those disciplines given that other professions utilizing mathematics and the sciences pay significantly more than public teaching. A differentiated compensation plan may be adopted in an LEA that:

(1) Has difficulty in recruiting and retaining highly qualified mathematics or science teachers;

(2) Has a number of teachers teaching mathematics or science on permits or waivers; or

(3) Needs to provide incentives to recruit and retain highly qualified mathematics or science teachers to fill assignments in high priority schools;

(b) The department of education shall perform a survey of differentiated compensation plans for areas in which there are teaching shortages, including bonuses and supplemental pay plans, provided in other states either by the state or a school district. The department of education shall develop guidelines for differentiated compensation plans for use by local boards of education in developing such plans.

(c) The department of education shall approve a differentiated compensation plan developed by a local board of education pursuant to this section prior to its implementation.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.